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ISLAMIC FOCUS

DEALING WITH
RAGE

Bravery
& Betrayal

Road to
JERUSALEM

Ahlan Wasahlan...
FROM THE EDITOR

Road rage statistics in South Africa are alarming. They paint a disturbing pattern in South Africa where violence is normalized and used to resolve disputes including road altercations. Our article explores how we respond to other people's tragedies. These are not moments for speculation, blame or circulation of sensitive content. We look at what we should and shouldn't do at such times, tips on how to avoid becoming a victim of road rage, and more importantly how to resolve our internal anger issues.

Wherever we turn it seems there is no end to the world suffering that Muslims are facing. Was there a time where the Muslim community was at such a low ebb? We reflect on the era of the Crusades and draw parallels with the time we live in. Muslim revival and the liberation of Masjid Aqsa was not an overnight achievement. It was part of a 100-year project bringing together various elements. The generation of Salahuddeen provides a plan of hope for a way out of the current despair.

The incident of Karbala resonates down the centuries. It was a tale of bravery and betrayal. The article in this issue looks at some of the aspects which can provide clarity especially with regards to the role of Iran in modern Muslim geo-politics. It places the Gaza and Palestinian struggle within that legacy of bravery which was displayed in Karbala. The feats of heroism we are witnessing will write the liberation of the oppressed lands of Islam.

We round up our offering of articles in this issue with one on feeling the pain of others and empathising with their suffering. This is an indispensable quality of brotherhood that permeates the very make-up of Islamic unity.

These articles are meant to provide an insight into topics that are of current relevance to our lives and inspire conversations around them.

Email your thoughts to us:
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(Moulana)

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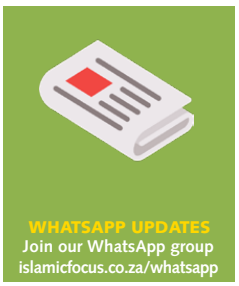

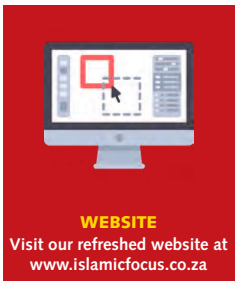

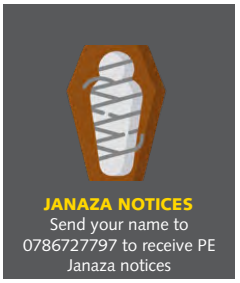

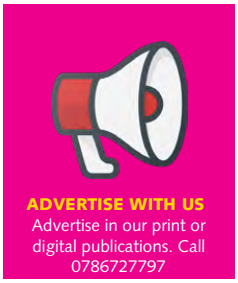

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DEALING WITH RAGE

Theres's a worrying statistic in South Africa: In 2023 a survey found that from July to September 2023 road rage was responsible for 1272 attempted murders, 1053 murders and 20,686 assaults with grievous bodily harm. In the following three months of October to December 2023 it increased to 1702 attempted murders, 1116 murders and 27,918 assaults. Those statistics have only shown signs of increasing. It was also found that South Africa has some of the highest levels of road rage in the world with 67% of respondents reporting that they experienced aggressive behaviour on the road. Much of the road rage deaths are linked to incidents escalating from arguments over minor traffic issues or bumper bashings.

This trend is an alarming pattern in South Africa where violence is normalized and used to resolve disputes. It is not restricted to road rage but spills over into domestic violence as well. In road rage most of the actual rage is vented from within the vehicle with angry gestures, swearing or aggressive driving. The fact that the person is physically cut off from the object of his rage lends a sense of immunity and licence to act as he wills. This holds true for domestic violence as well where people unleash their anger on the most vulnerable – kids, women and the elderly again with this sense of immunity that outsiders cannot see what they do. In a similar strain, behind the anonymity of the phone screen, people unleash some of the worst elements of their behaviour with this self-same sense of immunity.

The first thing that needs to be addressed is how we respond to other people's tragedy. These are not moments for speculation, blame or circulation of sensitive content. Rather they are moments of restraint, Dua and deep reflection. As a community we must learn from these incidents and work together to ensure they are not repeated.

THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS WE SHOULD NOT DO:

1. Don't forward sensitive content such as videos or images. Put yourself in the other person's shoes: would you like it if you were in a traumatic situation and people started sharing clips of yourself, wife or kids? This thought should be enough to stop us joining in what is a despicable habit.

2. Do not speculate or spread unverified claims. "O you who believe, if a sinful person brings you a report, verify its correctness, so that you do not harm people out of ignorance, and then become regretful over what you did." (Noble Quran 49:6) When we start making judgements without having all the facts at hand, this can become a means of intense regret later. Verify information received, and even better, don't bother poking your nose into something that has no relevance to your life. The Hadith tells us, "It is enough to be proven a liar for a person to go around narrating whatever he hears." (Muslim)

3. What follows from this is that we should not turn tragedy into unnecessary topics of discussion or gossip. People tend to find it easy to make other people's drama into lunch discussions or a topic for the braai.

4. Do not inflame emotions with unnecessary commentary. It is a sickness of our times that we feel the need to comment on every topic that pops up on our social media feed. The need to comment on everything often stems from insecurity, a desire for attention or validation, or a compulsion to fill a void in one's own life. It's an attempt to feel relevant. This compulsion leads to never-ending problems because of having a say in topics in which you have insufficient knowledge. "Do not pursue a thing about which you have no knowledge." (Noble Quran 17:36)

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WHEN FACED WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S TRAUMA:

1. Make Dua for all those affected. Make it a habit when you see someone in need such as being stuck on the side of the road, that you and your family be saved from it and that the person involved finds an easy way out of the trouble he is in.

2. Show restraint and responsibility in what we share. The better thing nine out of ten times is not to share even your own experiences let alone other people's business. Once something is sent out, it becomes very easy for it to be misconstrued and manipulated.

3. Where possible, support the affected families meaningfully and with dignity.

4. Take a collective lesson as a community. Ibn al Jawzi said, "Take lesson from those who made mistakes before you, before you become a lesson for those after you." An Arabic proverb sums it up, "Prosperous is the one who learns from the mistakes of others."

5. Work together to prevent such tragedies in the future.

We are a community, so these tragedies should be moments of reflection, responsibility and collective reform, not reaction.

TIPS TO AVOID BECOMING A VICTIM OF ROAD RAGE

Coming back to road rage, there are some tips that can lower the chances of becoming a victim of road rage:

1. Drive safely. This sounds easy but it means putting more focus on driving and less on our phones especially.

2. Don't tailgate someone else or do something which can trigger a person who might already have a short fuse.

3. Plan your trip. It might be unavoidable going to work during rush hour, but planning ahead mentally can help you be prepared especially for congestion and irresponsible driving. This could prepare you to be calm.

4. Don't drink and drive, and more applicable to the Muslim community would be not to take drugs or substances that will impair our judgement and reduce our rational response to situations.

5. One of the most important factors to keep in mind is to be patient and not engage an angry driver. This will require lowering one's ego and pride. This is a secret to resolving much of our social misadventures.

48% of road rage incidents involve a child being in the car witnessing what's happening. This should be a deterrent for reacting in an unseemly manner. A person realised that his driving was aggressive when he heard his two-year-old child swear when reacting to a situation. He wondered where the kid could have picked up this habit and on reflection realised that it was from his habit of swearing at other drivers. What are we teaching our kids about handling frustrating events on then road when our default response is swearing, showing rude signs or aggressive driving?

WHAT IF WE ARE THE ONES PERPETRATING ROAD RAGE?

We need to be honest about it and acknowledge our weakness in this regard. Resolve to work on addressing one's anger issues. There are some things that can help in this regard:

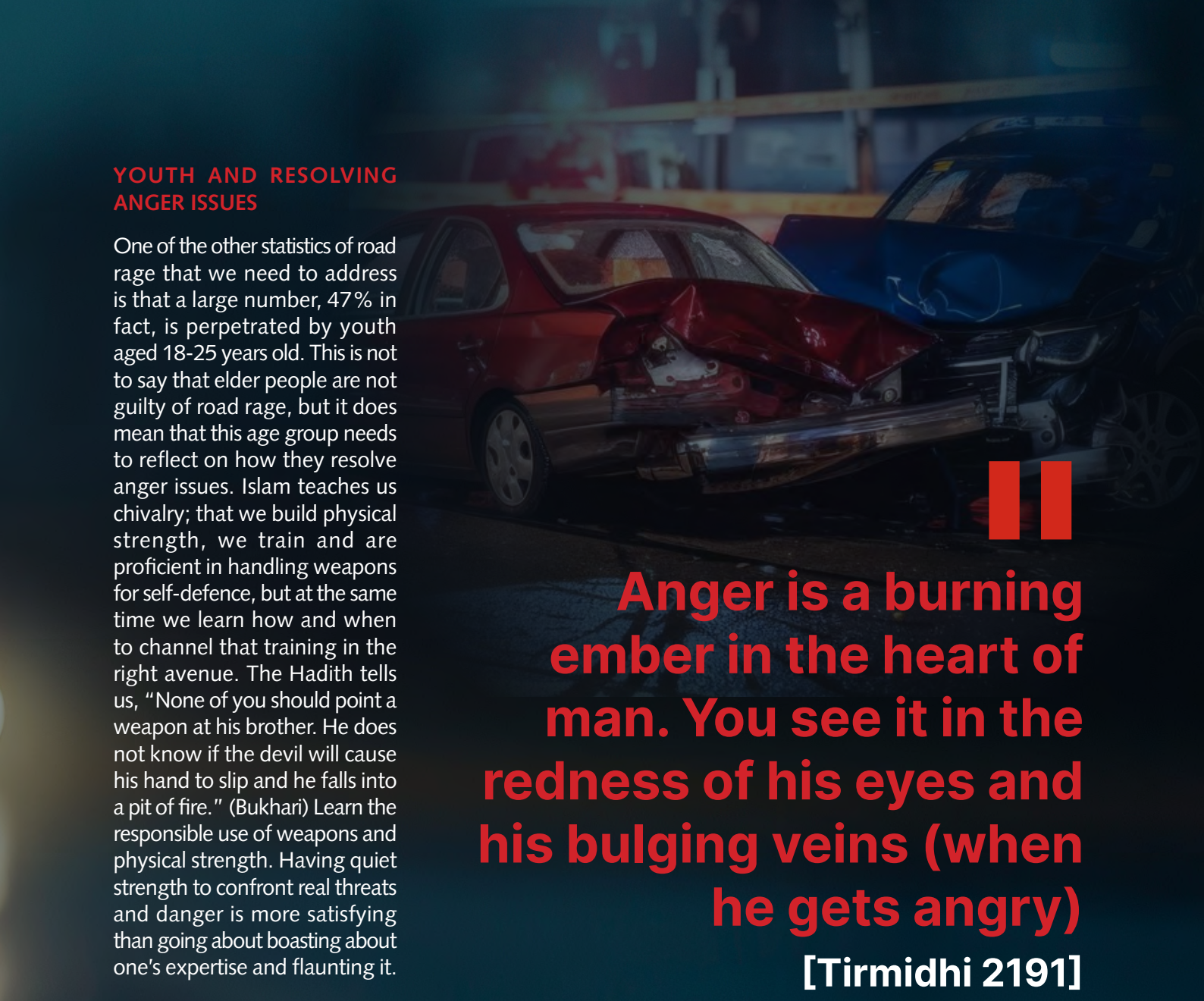
1. Focus on driving and not on your work or home stress while behind the wheel.

2. Don't try to change other people's driving attitudes. You can't do it, but you can control your own habits. The other person might be a learner driver, or a new driver.

3. Don't retaliate by pressing the hooter, flashing your lights or gesturing. This will only aggravate the situation.

4. Countdown from 1 to 10 when faced with growing anger. This is an old trick, but it works. The Hadith teaches us some ways to control anger, and one is to practice silence, "When one of you gets angry, he should remain silent." (Ahmad 2137) How many a times we say things in anger that we later regret and had to apologise for? While feelings of anger are often inevitable, we can minimize their negative consequences by allowing our emotions to settle before speaking. Taking this pause helps prevent hasty remarks and their potential fallout.

5. Know when to walk away. The Prophet ﷺ said, "If any of you becomes angry and he is standing, let him sit down so his anger will go away; if it does not, then let him lie down." (Ibn Hibban, 5688) When angry, change your physical state. This helps reduce physical tension. If you still don't cool down, walk away from what is making you angry. The physical distance can help you calm down.



YOUTH AND RESOLVING ANGER ISSUES

One of the other statistics of road rage that we need to address is that a large number, 47% in fact, is perpetrated by youth aged 18-25 years old. This is not to say that elder people are not guilty of road rage, but it does mean that this age group needs to reflect on how they resolve anger issues. Islam teaches us chivalry; that we build physical strength, we train and are proficient in handling weapons for self-defence, but at the same time we learn how and when to channel that training in the right avenue. The Hadith tells us, "None of you should point a weapon at his brother. He does not know if the devil will cause his hand to slip and he falls into a pit of fire." (Bukhari) Learn the responsible use of weapons and physical strength. Having quiet strength to confront real threats and danger is more satisfying than going about boasting about one's expertise and flaunting it.

The true warrior is brave, strong and fearless on the battlefield or when faced with crime but is kind and helpful off it. The Muslim warrior becomes an example of helpfulness; the teacher must go home and speak about the stressful day they had at school, but that the Muslim kids made it all worthwhile with their pleasant nature, respectfulness and kindness. The workers must speak on the taxis and buses going back home about the understanding and sublime character of their Muslim employers.

Always living in a state of simmering anger has negative health consequences as well. "Anger is a burning ember in the heart of man. You see it in the redness of his eyes and his bulging veins (when he gets angry)." (Tirmidhi 2191)

> **"Anger is a burning ember in the heart of man. You see it in the redness of his eyes and his bulging veins (when he gets angry)"**
> **[Tirmidhi 2191]**

Controlling anger is a skill that means recognising the early signs of what triggers your temper and using strategies to manage emotions in a constructive way. If you are faced with aggressive behaviour, lower the ego and move aside. If you are tempted to display aggression over petty issues, lower the ego and be a better person. Ibn al Qayyim emphasizes that lowering the ego is a continuous process which is essential for spiritual wellbeing and getting closer to Allah ﷻ. He says that the ego is the greatest veil between a person and his Creator, often leading to arrogance and destruction.

The Hadith teaches us a Dua to keep anger under control,

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي وَأَذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قَلْبِي

"O Allah, forgive my sins, and remove the anger from my heart..." (Ahmad) Learn anger management and gradually bring it under control. It will become easier over time to remain calm and composed in the face of anger.

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Road to JERUSALEM

The world around us paints a picture of despair wherever you look. The powerful are calling the shots, Gaza lies in ruins with no tangible response from weak Muslim governments who are enslaved to the west, Aqsa is violated increasingly by Jewish extremists, Hindutva mobs are creating terror in India, Islamophobic attacks are on the rise in the west and the Epstein files showed us how the people in power are manipulated. From the royal houses of Europe to presidents and prime ministers, the world that wants to lecture Muslims on women's rights is underpinned by the most depraved abuse of vulnerable girls, boys and women. Ineffectual international bodies like the United Nations which were created by the former colonial powers to keep their grip on world power serve no real purpose. It seems like we have no glimmer of hope anywhere. The war with Iran is adding to the chaos and instability across the globe.

Was there a time where the Muslim community was at such a low ebb? Yes, there were many similar situations, maybe not on the full scale as today, where the Muslim world was in tatters. The era of the Crusades saw Masjid Aqsa being captured in 1099. At that time petty Muslim states were bickering among themselves even making alliances with the Crusaders against other Muslim states. Shia political manoeuvring was hampering Muslim progress and shadowy organisations like the Assassins and Templars were trying to influence politics.

After 88 years Salahuddeen Ayyubi liberates Masjid Aqsa and Jerusalem. But his success didn't come in a vacuum. He was the product of several factors which combined. These very same factors provide the hope for our times, and a plan on how we can forge the way ahead and remove the despair.

THE FIRST ELEMENT WAS A SUNNI REVIVAL

One of the foremost personalities instrumental in this was Nizam al Mulk Abu Ali Hassan al Tusi. He was a Persian Sunni scholar and vizier of the Seljuk Empire. He was the effective ruler of the state after Alp Arslan. He was a pious individual who used to fast Mondays and Thursdays. He introduced policies which remained the basic foundation for the administration of the Muslim world until the 20th century. His most important legacy though was founding a system of Madressas across the Seljuk Empire called the Nizamiyyas. These institutes were among the first well-organised institutions of higher learning in the world. The quality was among the highest and they were even renowned in Europe. They were funded by the royal establishment and were an attempt to combat the rise of Shiasm. They produced judges, scholars and officials. Imam Ghazali was a professor of the Nizamiyya Madressa in Baghdad. He authored works like Ihyaa Uloom al Deen to revive Sunni practice as well as an acclaimed work, Fadhaaih al Batiniyyah, exposing the Ismaili Shia who were in power in some parts of the Muslim world at the time.

Nizam al Mulk was assassinated by the Ismaili Shia but his legacy impacted the Muslim world. The graduates of his Madressas in turn educated the warriors and leaders like Nuruddeen Zengi and Salahuddeen Ayyubi.

THE SCHOLARS

The second element in the success of Salahuddeen was the role of the scholars. Sheikh Abdul Qadir al Jilani was a prominent scholar of the time of Salahuddeen. Ibn Khashab from Aleppo made urgent calls for military resistance against the Crusaders. Najmuddeen al Khabashani was pivotal in Salahuddeen's consolidation of power in Egypt. Al Qadi al Faadil was his closest advisor. There were many others who raised awareness of the Crusader threat. Among the scholars who conscientized the people and raised awareness of the need to confront the invading Crusaders was Abu Sa'ad al Harawi. Jerusalem had fallen to the Crusaders in July 1099. Some of the survivors of the massacre reached Damascus where al Harawi was a judge. He embarked on a course of activism, undertaking a trip to Baghdad to stir the Abbasid Caliph into doing something. He arrived in Baghdad on the 29th of Ramadaan on a Friday. He went to the main Masjid where people were gathered for Juma prayers and started eating openly in front of everyone. Once he got their attention through this tactic, he told them about the fall of Aqsa. The Caliph Mustazhir promised to do something, but nothing came of it.

The scholars played an important role in correcting people and bringing them closer to Islam, in reforming their character, combating Shiasm and rousing the people to Jihad.

MILITARY RESISTANCE

The third element was the build up of military resistance and Jihad. Military leaders like Kerbagha, Jikirmish, Ilghazi, Aqsuqur, al Bursuqi and Mawdood ibn Tuntash started engaging the Crusaders who had come into the heart of the Muslim lands. The Crusaders were in Syria, attacking Iraq, aiming their sights on Egypt and in control of Jerusalem. Mawdood ibn Tuntash defeated them in the Battle of Sannibra in Palestine, forcing them into defensive positions for the first time. Mawdood was assassinated by the Ismaili Shia order of the Assassins in the Umayyad Masjid of Damascus while fasting on Juma. People urged him to break his fast when he was fatally wounded but he refused saying, "I do not want to meet Allah ﷻ except while fasting." He died that day. The Seljuk governor of Mosul, al Bursuqi, took on the mantle of resistance. He scored some victories against the Crusaders but also falls to the Shia. He was praying Juma in Mosul, and the Ismaili Shia

assassinate him. The night before he had seen a dream where he was being attacked by a pack of wild dogs. People urged him not to go out of his home for a few days, but he said, "I will never leave Juma for anything."

THE SHIA AGENDA

Between the threat of the Crusaders and the weak, bickering Muslim leaders was the deviousness of the Shia who hampered Muslim progress at every turn. They were the fourth element. They assassinated, among others, Muslim leaders like Nizam al Mulk, Mawdood and al Bursuqi. Who were these Shia? They were Ismaili Shia also known as Batiniyyah due to their rejection of many of the outward laws of Islam. They claimed Ismail ibn Jafar al Sadiq as their Imam and were heavily influenced by the philosophy of Plato. They controlled North Africa at the time of the Crusaders and Salahuddeen. They established Azhar University to propagate their beliefs. They banned Taraweeh prayers in some places under their control. In 950 in Burqa, modern day Libya, they announced Eid the following day without having sighted the moon. The judge Muhammad al Hablli refused to endorse this and insisted on the physical sighting of the moon. They hung him in the sun and crucified him until he died. In their reign, they killed many Ulama of Islam.

One of the Ismaili Shia branches was the Order of the Assassins founded in 1090 by Hassan Sabah. They operated out of mountain castles in Persia and Syria, assassinating many Muslim leaders. Salahuddeen twice escaped their assassination attempts. In 1164, their leader Hassan II gathered them at their Alamut fortress in Iran and declared on the 17th of Ramadaan that the hidden Shia Imam had abrogated the external laws of Islam. They began eating during the day, and drinking wine while facing their backs to Makkah Mukarramah. The Druze in Syria who are allied to Israel, and the Alawites who ruled Syria until 2024 are offshoots of the Ismaili Shia. The Nizari Shia who recognise the Aga Khan as their Imam today are also from the same sect, as were the Qarmatians who stole the Black Stone from the Kabah and kept it for many years.

Salahuddeen's uncle Asaduddeen Shirkuh went to Egypt to infiltrate the Shia state. He was eventually appointed vizier by the Shia leader al Adid li Deenillah but died two months later. Al Adid then looked for the most inexperienced person from Shirkuh's forces to manipulate but made the biggest blunder of his life by appointing the young Salahuddeen as vizier. Gradually Salahuddeen erased Shia power, overthrew the Shia dynasty and state, made Azhar a Sunni institute of learning and eradicated Shiasm from Egypt totally.

THE CRUSADERS

The Crusaders were the fifth element in the era of Salahuddeen. They were created by Pope Urban II to take Muslim lands. Sicily fell to them and they attacked Muslim Spain. The Crusaders were driven by greed for the riches of the Muslim world and were guilty of a long list of atrocities, massacres, rape and cannibalism:

1. In taking Jerusalem, they slaughtered 70,000 civilians.

2. In the Siege of Marrat an Numan in Syria they killed the men who surrendered and enslaved the women and children. They proudly ate the meat of the Muslims who were killed and traded their flesh. Cannibalism was not an isolated atrocity but happened at other places such as Antioch where even babies were eaten.

3. Even the celebrated King Richard of England had 3,000 Muslim men, women and children prisoners killed in Acre.

4. Jews were also not safe from the marauding Crusaders who raped and killed thousands of them in Europe on their way to the Middle East.

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

Individual efforts also stood out from the collective with people using their skills for Islam:

1. The County of Edessa was a Crusader state set up in north Iraq and south Turkey. Imadduddeen Zengi liberated it in 1144. This was a major blow to the Crusaders as it was their first state established in the East. The Muslim scholar and Muazzin Moosa al Armani was a teacher in Mosul. He entered Edessa during the siege dressed in Armenian clothes which would be identified with Christians. He said that he went to gather information. He came upon a mosque and climbed the Minaret. He called out the Athan to see what would happen. On hearing the Athan from that side of the city, the Crusaders thought the city was under attack from that quarter and abandoned the walls they were defending allowing the Muslims to scale them and take the city.

2. In the Siege of Acre the Crusaders besieged the city. Salahuddeen defended it for two years using Muslim ships to try and break the siege and supply the city's defenders. The Crusaders used 5 storey siege towers that were immune to the current formula of Greek fire. A son of a Damascus coppersmith developed a new formula using his knowledge of chemistry and the mixture was used to burn out the siege towers.

THE LONG-TERM PROJECT FOR SUCCESS

The legacy of Salahuddeen showed how a 100-year project of schools, education, scholars and Jihad eventually led to him liberating Masjid Aqsa and Jerusalem in 1187. When he was dying with no personal wealth to his name, he sent his flag bearer to carry his shroud through the streets of Damascus to send the message: the great Sultan takes nothing but these sheets and a hole in the ground on his journey onward. He was not successful in isolation but the culmination of many factors.

Power is fleeting while deeds remain. Through a mixture of revival and drawing people closer to Islam, uniting the Muslim lands from Egypt to Sudan, Yemen to Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Syria under one banner with a common purpose, and through making sacrifices in Jihad, the liberation came and Salahuddeen played the final role. Yes, there were defeats on the road, there were setbacks and heartaches, but these were seen as a means of separating the sincere from the hypocrites. Lessons were learned from the failures and reforms and adjustments made.

APPLYING THE LESSONS FOR TODAY

Our situation is very much the same currently. We need to follow the road that Salahuddeen's generation followed:

1. Revive our knowledge and practice of Islam.

2. Unite our hearts despite our differences in facing a common threat. Then Kurd stood next to Turk, next to Arab, next to Persian. All Sunni Muslims united in purpose.

3. Kindle the spirit of sacrifice within our kids and equip them with the capacity to endure some hardships and to strive for Islam.

4. Don't discount the individual efforts, our unique capabilities that can make small changes that become decisive in the bigger picture and long term. You never know the lasting impact your effort can have. Use our skills to uplift humanity, to make the world a slightly better place, and to serve Islam. Our efforts could well be part of the next 100-year plan to liberate Aqsa.

5. Know your enemy and how they operated in the past and currently. Knowing the plans and goals of the twin threats of the external enemies and the enemy within is essential if we want to be able to defend ourselves against them.

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"Do not treat people except in the way you would love to be treated by them." (Tabrani)
"Love for people what you love for yourself." (Musnad Aḥmad)

Bravery & Betrayal

Hazrat Hussain (ra)'s martyrdom was chosen to take place on the Day of Aashura (10th Muharram) to enhance the virtue of his martyrdom. We can relate to and speak about this sacrifice as its relevance echoes down the corridors of history and provides guidance on dealing with the current world political scene.

The people of Kufa pledged allegiance to Hussain ﷺ and called him to their city. As he came to Karbala, about 80-90 km away, he got to know that they had deserted him. They numbered nearly 40,000 people and were but a few kilometres away, yet they betrayed him. Hussain ﷺ refused to bow to political pressure and stood firm. Ibn Ziyaad prevented his people from getting water. Hussain ﷺ told his soldiers with him that they were free to go, yet none deserted him. He was martyred, fighting bravely to the end. His head was cut off from his body. Ibn Ataillah ﷺ said, "Desperation draws Divine gifts You may gain benefits through enduring tough times that you might not have achieved through Salaah and fasting alone."

The next year a group called the Tawwabeen or repentant ones formed in Kufa to make belated amends for having abandoned Hussain ﷺ. Under Sulayman ibn Surad Khuzai, 16,000 people enlisted. At the crunch time only 3,000 pitched up to fight. This betrayal by the early Shia community on the one side, the Khawarij on the other and the Sunni leadership on the third side are features that repeat themselves through history. Today the Arab leadership has betrayed the cause of not only Palestine a few kilometres away from the military bases, but actively keep the colonial borders drawn by imperial powers to divide the Muslims. They do this in order to secure their thrones of power. They trample on the aspirations of their people to live under Islamic law.

Betrayal

In 1992 Algerians voted for Islam and the army carried out a brutal repression. Morocco is actively normalising relations with the Israeli occupation entity. Turkey is supplying Israel with oil from Muslim Azerbaijan through the Gaza genocide. Saudi Arabia has sold out the heartland of Islam. Even the Arab leaders who stood up to American imperialism like Gaddafi and Gamal Abdel Nasser were influenced by ideologies alien to Islam like socialism and brutally crushed any popular aspiration to live under Islam.

Iran seemed like the only regional power standing up to Israel. Along with the Houthi Shia in Yemen, they have shown the only active resistance to Israel. It pays to remember that all Muslim lives are important and that Iran has been the direct cause of some of the worst loss of innocent Muslim lives in recent times in Syria by backing Bashar Assad, in tearing Yemen apart in a civil war, and in aiding the American wars on Afghanistan and Iraq. Iran's constitution only allows an Ithna Ashari Shia to be president, and no Sunni Masjid is allowed in the capital Tehran. The Sahaba ﷺ are still actively cursed. Even though Khameni said that it should be stopped no active steps are taken to ensure that this is enforced, nor has any official apology been issued from Khomeini's tirades against the Sahaba ﷺ .

Desperation draws Divine gifts that you might not have achieved through worship alone.

Despite all this, Iranian attacks on the genocidal Israel are welcome along with the Houthi resistance. We shall however, remain firm on our belief that Shiasm is not the answer to the Muslim world's suffering.

"

Hope goes hand in hand with action. Otherwise, it is just wishful thinking.

Bravery

The bravery displayed by Hussain continues to flow in the Muslim community. Abdullah ibn Zubair a took up the mantle of resistance against Yazeed and his successors and met his end in martyrdom in Makkah Mukarramah. Asad ibn Furat, a notable student of Imam Malik and Imam Muhammad rahimahumallah headed the assault on Sicily in 827 CE. With 150,000 and 70 ships they took the island from the Romans. The Siege of Syracuse was difficult, and people asked him to abandon it, yet he refused. He continued until victory came even though he was mortally wounded and died as a martyr. He is buried in Palermo, Sicily, Italy as a sign that for Muslims success is not necessarily in gaining material victory. That's a bonus. The main thing is to give our lives to Allah and show our commitment to Him.

In 1340 the Battle of Tarifa or Rio Salado was fought in Spain. After many people had fled, the great scholar and an author of Tafseer and other works, Ibn al Juzayy remained firm. He met martyrdom at the age of 48. This bravery is seen in the Palestinian freedom fighters of Hamas, Saraya al Quds and others. After enduring two years of relentless genocide and famine, and unimaginable atrocities by the Israeli occupation war machine, they still manage to go out in active combat against Israeli forces and inflict losses on them. They embody the Hadith, "A group of my nation will remain firm, fighting for the truth till Qiyamah. He who deserts them will not harm them. They are at Jerusalem's Masjid and its surroundings." (Tabrani)

As much as we are disgusted at the betrayal of the leadership of Muslim countries, we are hopeful in the bravery and sense of justice that will continue to flow in the Muslim nation and that feats of heroism will write the liberation of oppressed lands. Ibn Ataillah noted, "Hope goes hand in hand with action. Otherwise, it is just wishful thinking." The sacrifice of Hussain and others will continue to motivate, inspire and drive people to make something of their lives.

Feeling the Pain

An essential part of the culture of Islam is for each individual to consider himself/herself as part of the same body.

1. Sayyiduna Nu'man ibn Bashir ﷺ reports that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The believers in their mutual mercy, love and compassion are like a single body, when one limb is in pain the rest of the body joins in insomnia, fever and restlessness." (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith: 6011)

2. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The believers are like a building, they support and strengthen/support each other" (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith: 481 and Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 2585)

The current sad state of the Ummah both physically as well as spiritually should trouble every reciter of the kalimah Laa ilaha illallah, Muhammadur Rasulullah.

Shaykh Muhammad 'Awwamah often discusses this, and laments on our appalling negligence of such an important aspect of what he labels as "part of the Islamic culture" and "the character of Islam." In other words, every Muslim ought to feel the pain of the Ummah.

Inspiring anecdotes

Shaykh Muhammad 'Awwamah recently quoted the following incidents in this regard, to illustrate the noble character of our predecessors.

1. Bishr Al-Hafi ﷺ

Once someone visited him on a cold night and saw him shivering, whilst wearing only his lower wrap, despite having additional clothing in his possession which were hanging on a rack inside his room. When he was asked about this, he replied, "There are many poor people (in the Ummah), and I am unable to provide them all with clothes. Therefore, I am doing this so that I can sympathise with them by bearing the cold like they are." (Fathul Qadir, vol. 2, pg. 301)

2. Sa'id ibn 'Uthman Al-Kalbiy ﷺ

Once on one cold night, Imam Sa'id ibn 'Uthman Al-Kalbiy ﷺ – a Maliki Hadith Scholar- cried the entire night. When he was asked about this he replied, "I thought of the (plight of the) poor people in the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ on a night like this, so I cried out of pity for them." Imam Sa'id ﷺ passed away in the year 295 AH. (Tartibul Madarik, vol. 2, pg. 418, no. 392)

Note: When noting this incident in his copy of the mentioned reference, Shaykh Muhammad 'Awwamah labelled it as, "among the rare incidents on the brotherhood of Islam."

3. Sariy As-Saqaty ﵀

On one occasion, all the shops in the market burned down, besides the one with whom Sariy As-Saqaty ﵀ had an investment. When the news reached him, he said, "Alhamdulillah." (This is exactly what any Muslim would say, out of gratitude for his investment being protected by Allah. However, Sariy ﵀ later realised that he was more concerned about his own interest, instead of the rest of the Muslims who lost their livelihood due to the fire.)

For the next thirty years he rebuked himself over this!

He says, "I am reciting istighfar (seeking forgiveness) for the past thirty years for saying Alhamdulillah (on that occasion)." (Siyar A'lamin Nubala, vol. 12, pg. 186)

The above are indeed unique forms of "feeling the pain" of others, and sympathising with them.

There are several more such incidents about our recent seniors as well, like that of Hazrat Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya, Hazrat Moulana In'amul Hasan, Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah (rahimahumullah) and others.

In fact Shaykh Muhammad 'Awwamah himself, is an example of this; as whenever he receives sad news of the suffering of the Ummah, one can easily notice the extreme effect it has on him.

The existence of every nation is by virtue of their morals. When they lose their morals, they themselves will be destroyed.

At times, he falls ill due to the effect of such news.

Shaykh Muhammad 'Awwamah, after citing the above incidents, quoted the following couplet to illustrate that the quality of feeling the pain of the Ummah is an essential trait for every Muslim. It is part of the character of Islam and that its absence is a warning sign of our decline:

"The existence of every nation is by virtue of their morals.

When they lose their morals, they themselves will be destroyed."

Empathy with the suffering of others

Moulana Haroon Abasoomar ﷺ would often mention that if we were truly concerned about the current sad state of the Ummah, we would not even be able to eat our meals. In the latter years of his life, as the suffering of the Ummah increased throughout the globe, he would say, "How can we feast or enjoy our meals when our own brothers and sisters are suffering so much?!" He considered himself in relation to the Ummah, as one limb of a single body. The suffering of any Muslim, in any part of the world would grieve him.

Any person he encountered that was in genuine need, he made a sincere effort to assist him, either by himself, or by instructing others to attend to it. The state of orphans and widows always pitied him. Whenever possible he tried to support them with his personal means. He had a special affinity with orphans and made arrangements that every day, at least one hot meal must be sent to the home of three orphan children.

Empathy is encouraged in Islam. Consider this Qur'anic verse about our beloved Prophet ﷺ, "There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves, who feels it very hard on him if you face a hardship, who is very anxious for your welfare, and for the believers he is very kind, very merciful." (Noble Quran 9:128)

One account of the Prophet ﷺ's empathy in action is when he was sitting in with his companions one morning, and members of a poor tribe approached them. They had no shoes and their skin was stuck to their bones because of hunger. The Prophet ﷺ became instantly moved upon seeing their condition and the color of his face changed. He had Bilal radyAllahu 'anhu give the call to prayer and gathered his companions. After praying, they took up a collection for the tribe, generously helping them. (Muslim)

Empathy is a trait that improves with time, and the more you develop it, the more it will benefit your life. When you make the intention to be empathetic with other people, your practice will in turn improve your empathic abilities. The first step is to make the intention to try to "walk in the shoes" of others.

May Allah ﷻ inspire us all to sympathise with the less fortunate of the Ummah, in whichever form possible; be it through Dua, moral and financial support, or in the manner mentioned in the incidents above.

Adapted from Al-Miftah

HADITH

VERIFICATION SERIES 20

In this series we bring you a selection of topics from hadithanswers.com

PASSING AWAY IN THE STATE OF IHRAM DURING HAJJ

Question: I am looking for the Hadith wherein a Sahabi ﷺ passed away in 'Arafah while on Hajj with Nabi ﷺ.

Answer: Imam Bukhari and Muslim ﷺ have recorded the following narration:

Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas ﷺ reported: There was a Sahabi ﷺ in 'Arafah with Rasulullah ﷺ who fell from his mount and was crushed. Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Wash him with water mixed with [leaves from] the lote tree, shroud him in two pieces of cloth, and neither perfume him nor cover his head for Allah will certainly raise him on the Day of Qiyamah and he will be reciting the Talbiyah."

(Sahih Bukhari, Hadith: 1265-1268 and 1849-1851, Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 1206)

And Allah ﷻ Knows best.

PERFORM HAJJ WITHOUT DELAY

Question: What is the reference for this Hadith?

"Whoever intends to perform Hajj should hasten to do so, for one may fall sick, lose his mount, or face unexpected needs."

Answer: : Imams Ibn Majah and Ahmad ﷺ have recorded this Hadith on the authority of Sayyiduna Fadl ibn 'Abbas ﷺ.

Sayyiduna Fadl ibn 'Abbas ﷺ reported that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Whoever intends to perform Hajj should hasten to do so, as they might fall ill, lose their means of transport, or encounter unexpected obstacles."

(Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith: 2883, Musnad Ahmad, vol. 1, pg. 214, Hadith: 1834 and vol. 1, pg. 323, Hadith: 2973)

The Hadith is well corroborated and suitable to quote.

Nabi ﷺ said:

"Hasten to perform Hajj -meaning the obligatory Hajj- for none of you knows what will happen to him"

Imam Ahmad ﷺ has recorded this Hadith on the authority of Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas ﷺ with a weak chain.

(Musnad Ahmad, vol. 1, pg. 314)

However the Hadith is sufficiently corroborated and is suitable to quote.

Imam Hakim and Imam Tabarani have recorded a supporting narration.

(Mustadrak Hakim, vol. 1, pg. 448, Al Mu'jamul Kabir, Hadith: 737-738, vol. 18. Also see: Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith: 2883, Zawaid Ibn Majah, Hadith: 963, Musnad Ahmad, vol. 1, pg. 214 and Targhib, vol. 2, pg. 168)

And Allah ﷻ Knows best.

HAJJ IS A TYPE OF JIHAD

Question: Is this a Hadith?

"Hajj is the jihad for the weak."

Answer: :Yes, this is a Hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ recorded by Imam Ibn Majah, Imam Ahmad and many other Muhaddithun.

Sayyidah Ummu Salamah ﷺ reported that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Hajj is the jihad for the weak" [i.e., For those who are physically unable to participate in jihad due to a valid reason, Hajj serves as their form of jihad.]

(Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith: 2902, Musnad Ahmad, vol. 6, pg. 294, Hadith: 26520)

The Hadith is well corroborated and suitable to quote.

Also see: Al Ajwibatul Mardiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 60 and Al Maqasidul Hasanah, Hadith: 393

And Allah ﷻ Knows best.

Sayyiduna 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud ﷺ said: "Three things, if found in a person, Allah will fill his heart with Iman: the companionship of a Jurist [a person well versed in the knowledge of Din], recitation of the Quran, and fasting."

(Bahjatul Majalis, vol. 2, pg. 128. Also see: Al Adabush Shar'iyyah, vol. 3, pg. 544)

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